GREAT RAILWAY ADVENTURES

ADVENTURE 6

BEEZY'S BIG BOY

BY LIN OLIVER ILLUSTRATED BY BILL DODGE

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ADVENTURE 6
Learning Curve Publishing
Chicago

LIONEL AMERICAN LEGEND

For Tyler, Gregory, and Alex King—
beloved big boys all. —L.O.

To Jesse and Craig. —B.D.

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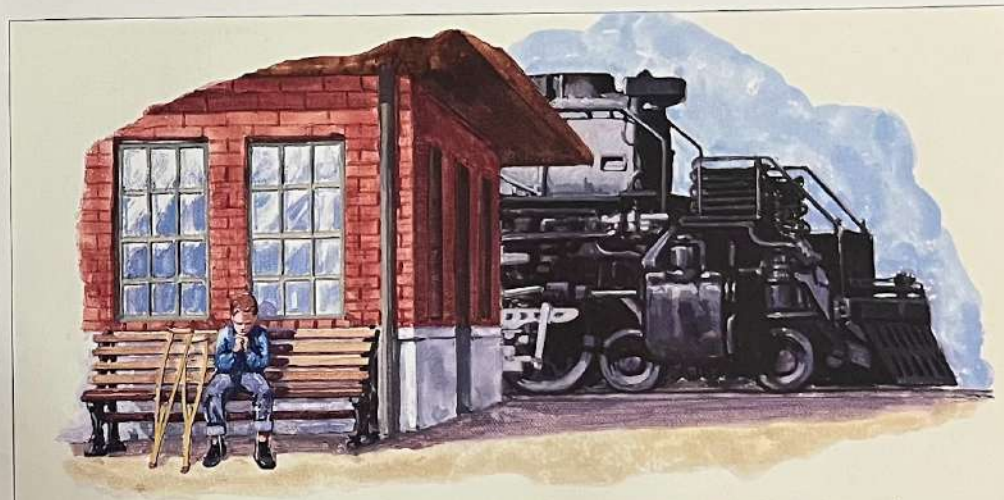
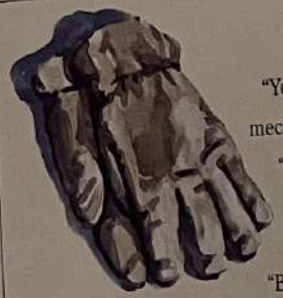
GREAT RAILWAY ADVENTURES BOOKS
ARE IN MEMORY OF
MURRAY SCHRAMM
GREAT FRIEND AND MENTOR



Beezy Jenkins sat on the platform of the Laramie train station and sighed a deep sigh. Usually, watching the trains come and go cheered him up. It made him remember the happy times before the war, when he and his father would sit together on this same bench eating peanut-butter sandwiches and watching the engines pull in and out. But it had been two years since Dad went away. Now when Beezy came to watch the trains, he came alone. Chip never wanted to come with him—he was always too busy with other things.

At the thought of his brother, Beezy sighed again. *It's not fair,* he thought. *It's just not fair.*



"You look like you've lost your best friend," said Theo Ellington, the mechanic who worked at the station. He pulled off his work gloves.

"What's wrong?"

"The county fair is coming up," Beezy said. "That's what's wrong."

"Last I heard, the fair was supposed to be fun," said Theo. "Barbecued ribs and fresh chocolate milk, everybody chowing down and playing games."

"Yeah," said Beezy, "and winning blue ribbons."

"Oh, so that's it," Theo said. Now he understood.

Beezy's brother Chip was one of the best barrel racers in all of Wyoming. He and his horse, Cobalt, always won the blue ribbon at the county fair rodeo. Beezy couldn't ride horses. He couldn't even walk very well. He'd had to use crutches since he was a little boy. Beezy slipped the crutches under his arms and pushed himself up.

"Too bad you're leaving," said Theo. "I was thinking you might want to sit inside the Big Boy while we turn it around."

"You mean it?" said Beezy.

Theo nodded, and for the first time that day Beezy smiled.

Theo put Beezy in the driver's seat of the Big Boy. It was Beezy's favorite engine, six hundred tons of pure power, the largest steam locomotive ever built. Sitting way up in the cab, Beezy felt like he was king of the world. The turntable began to rotate, slowly spinning the Big Boy around. Beezy looked out the window. He could see Chip coming into the station. "Chip!" he called. "Up here!"

Chip glanced up at Beezy and shook his head. He could never understand why his brother was so interested in trains.

"Come on down, Beez," he yelled. "Hurry! I want to get in a couple of practice runs before dark."

Beezy took a last look out the cab window, remembering the day his father had ridden the train to go off to war. He could still feel the rough wool of Dad's uniform as he hugged both boys and said, "Don't worry. I'll be back." Beezy wondered if Chip thought about that day as much as he did. He wanted to ask him, but by the time Beezy got down to the platform, Chip was already hurrying out the station door.

Mom was waiting for them in the corral with Cobalt saddled and ready to go. She was wearing her red riding boots, the ones she always wore when she coached Chip—the ones, she said, that took her cares away.

"Cobalt's all warmed up," she said, helping Chip into the saddle. "Remember to guide him with your legs as well as the reins."

Beezy sat on the fence, timing Chip's runs with a stopwatch. Chip rode around the barrels, graceful and easy in the saddle. Beezy wanted to be glad for his brother, he really did. He just couldn't help thinking that it was unfair. Chip was a champion, and he would never be one.

"I'm going inside," he said after a little while.

"Hey, Beez," Chip called from the ring. "You can't leave. You're my official timekeeper."

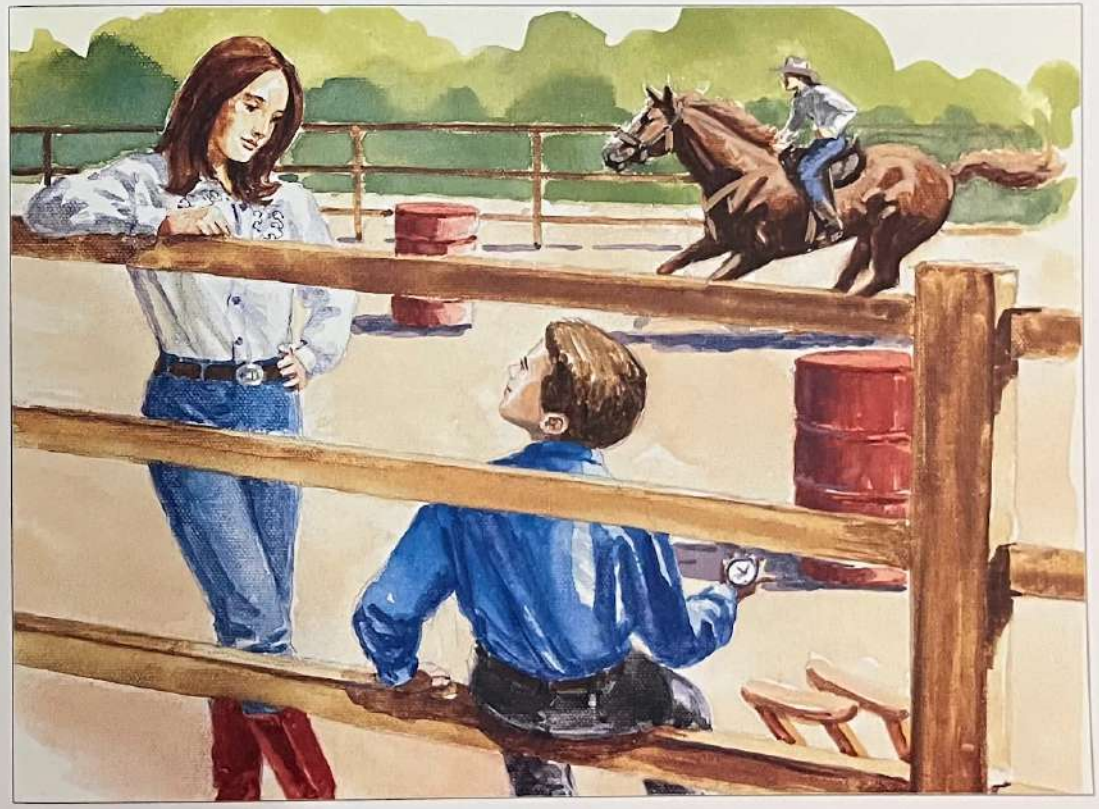
"I'm retiring," said Beezy. "I'm turning in my stopwatch."

Mom looked at him closely.

"I know it's hard for you to watch Chip," she said. "But everyone is good at something. Remember that, Beezy."

"All I'm good at is whistling 'Yankee Doodle' backward," said Beezy. "And who cares about that?"

"You're still finding out what you're good at," Mom said. "It takes time."



That night, Beezy couldn't fall asleep. In the dim light, he could see Chip sleeping like a rock—as usual. The entire wall above Chip's bed was covered with blue ribbons. Beezy looked at the wall above his bed. All he had was that picture he'd drawn in first grade of a purple rabbit flying a kite.

There was a knock at the door, and his mother came in. "I thought you'd be up," she whispered. "I brought a gift for you, honey, something special."

She handed Beezy a cardboard box. He lifted the lid. Inside was a model train engine. It was an old-fashioned steam locomotive, the kind they used way back when.

"Your father made this when he was your age," said Mom. "He always said he wanted you to have it when you were old enough." She kissed Beezy on the forehead. "I think you're old enough now."

The next morning, Beezy took the box to the station. He showed the model engine to Theo, who looked very surprised.

"I remember this!" he said. "I helped your father build it more than twenty years ago."

Beezy and Theo looked closely at the engine. Each detail was so carefully done—the cabin, the tender, the wheels, even the little gold numbers painted on the front. It seemed to Beezy to be the most perfect thing he had ever seen.

"Theo," said Beezy softly. "Do you think you could help me build a model of my own? Like you did for my dad?"

"You bet," Theo said.

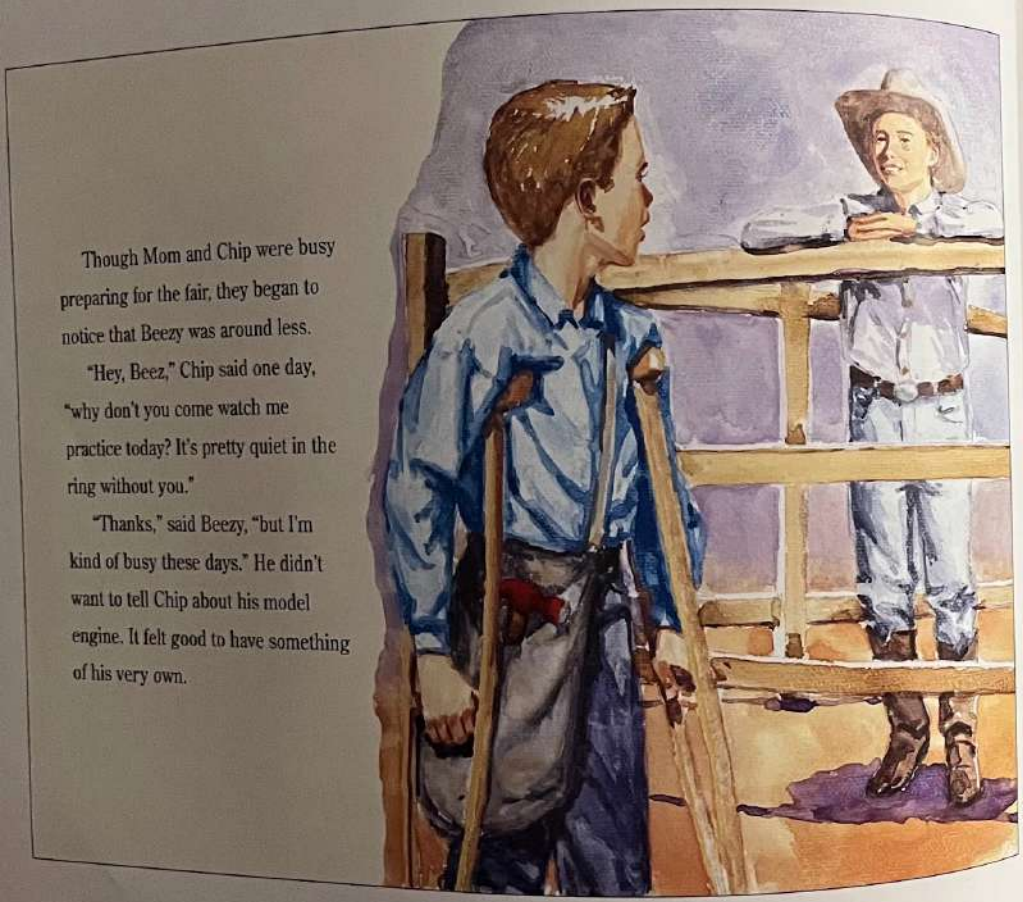
Beezy knew exactly which engine he wanted to build—the Big Boy.

From that day on, Beezy went most every afternoon to the roundhouse. He spent hours studying the Big Boy. When he was ready to begin building his model, he searched until he found just the right block of wood. While Theo repaired the big trains, Beezy carved his engine from the soft pine. He took care to include every detail, from the cowcatcher in front to the tender in back. Then Beezy got half-empty cans of enamel paint from Mr. James down at the hardware store and painted the engine shiny black. Day by day, week by week, the little Big Boy began to take shape.

Though Mom and Chip were busy preparing for the fair, they began to notice that Beezy was around less.

"Hey, Beez," Chip said one day, "why don't you come watch me practice today? It's pretty quiet in the ring without you."

"Thanks," said Beezy, "but I'm kind of busy these days." He didn't want to tell Chip about his model engine. It felt good to have something of his very own.



At last Beezy finished the Big Boy model. Theo admired Beezy's fine work.

"You should enter that in the county fair," said Theo. "They give out awards for handmade things like this."

"It's too late," said Beezy. "The fair starts tomorrow. Besides, I'd probably lose."

"So what?" said Theo. "All you can do is try your best. No shame in that."

"I'm just not the blue-ribbon type," Beezy said. "See you later, Theo."

Not long after Beezy left, Chip arrived looking for him. When he saw the model of the Big Boy sitting on the workbench, he whistled softly.

"Wow," he said to Theo. "How'd you learn to build something like that?"

"It wasn't me who built it," said Theo. "It was your brother."

"*Beezy* made this?" Chip said in amazement. "You're kidding!"

"I tried to get him to enter it in the fair," said Theo, "but he wouldn't."

"*I* would if I were him," said Chip.

"That's the point," said Theo. "You're not him. He doesn't have the confidence that you have. Beezy thinks you're the winner in the family."

Chip was silent. He had never really thought about how Beezy must have been feeling all these years. Never, that is, until now.

The day of the fair, Mom seemed almost as excited as Chip. She put on a new dress and shoes. Beezy thought it was odd that she wasn't wearing her red riding boots. When they drove up to the fairgrounds, Mom told the boys that she had a quick errand to run and she'd be back soon.

The barrel-race competition began. It was going to be a tough race this year. The first rider, a girl with orange freckles all over her face, beat Chip's old record. As she left the ring, she said to Chip, "See if you can top that!"

"What if I lose to her?" said Chip, swallowing hard. "Everyone will laugh at me. I know they will."

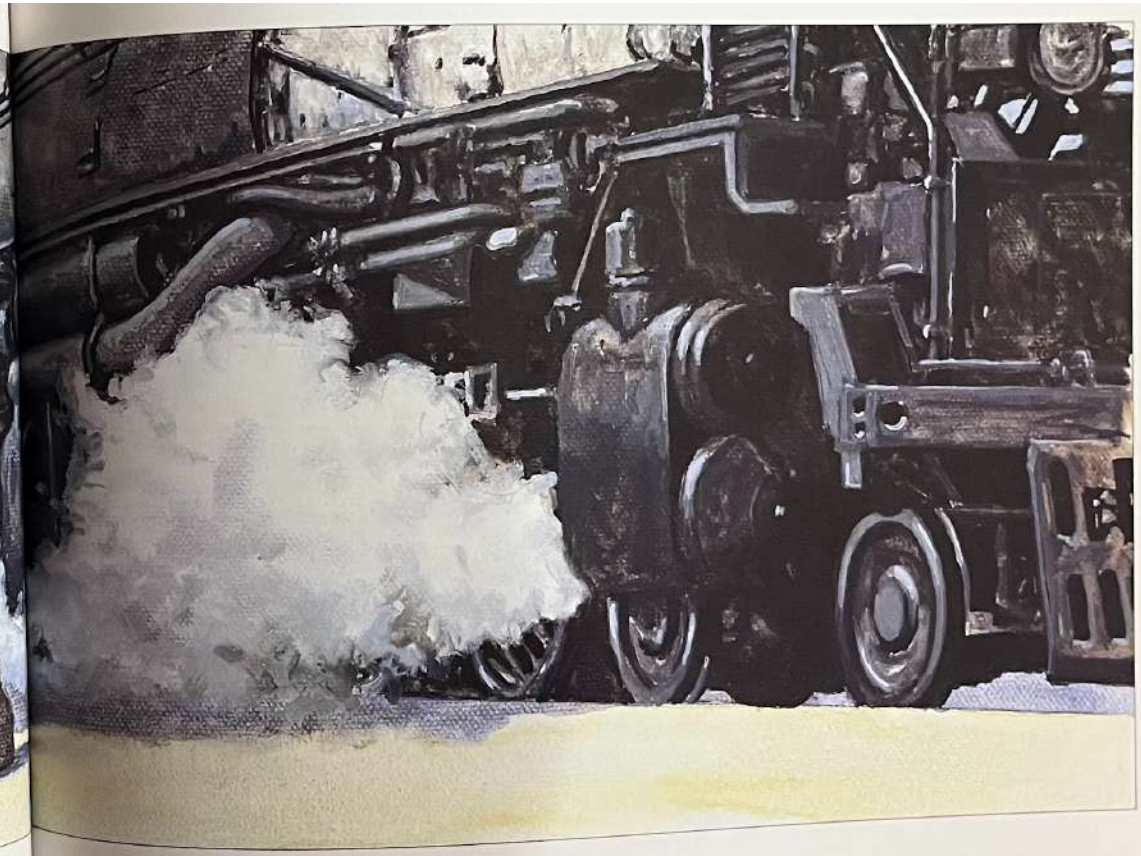
Beezy put his hand on Chip's shoulder. "They won't laugh at you," he said. "They'll say you tried your best. No shame in that."

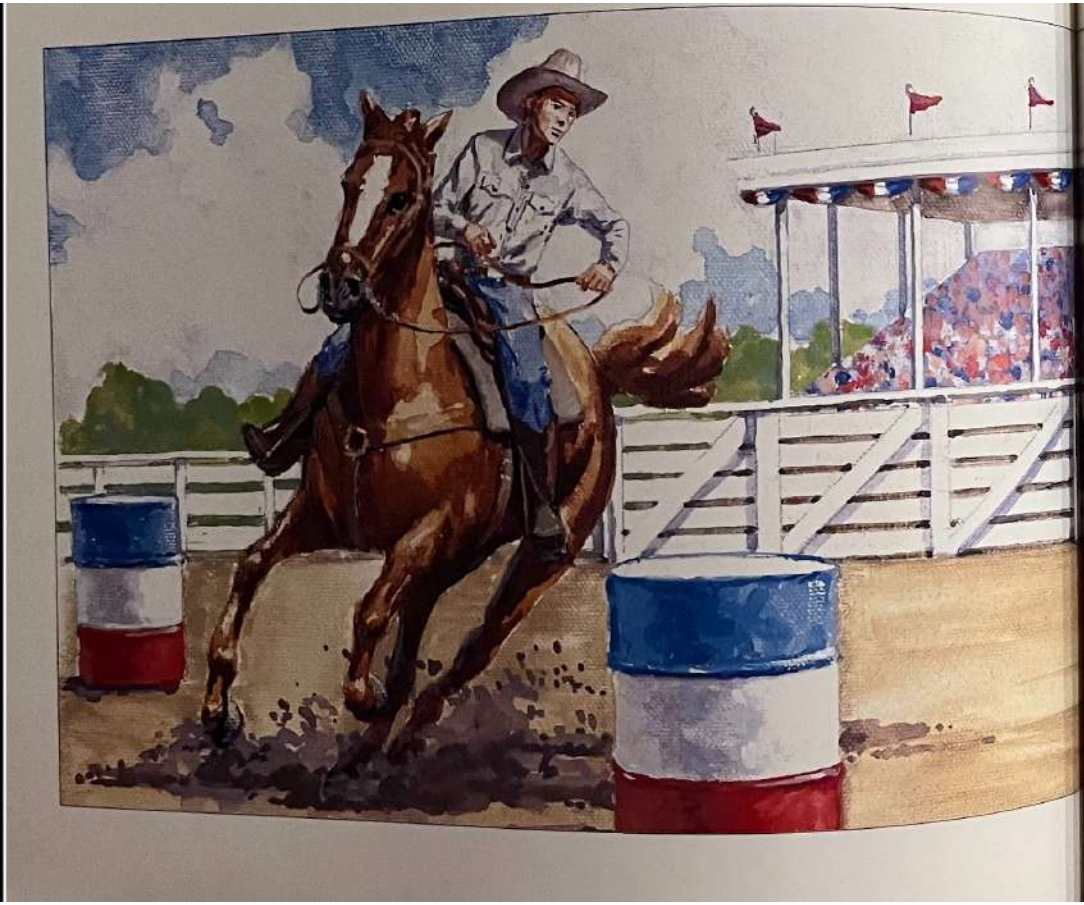
Beezy had never realized that Chip could be afraid of losing, too. Never, that is, until now.

While Chip and Beezy were waiting at the corral, their mother was waiting on the platform of the Laramie train station. She paced back and forth until the Big Boy pulled up. A door opened, and a man in uniform stepped out. He looked at her, and there were tears in his eyes. She ran into his arms. They hugged and laughed and then hugged again.

"It's so good to be home," he said.

"Oh, darling, wait till the boys see you," she said. "They won't believe their eyes."





Back at the fair, it was Chip's turn to ride. He looked anxiously around the stands.

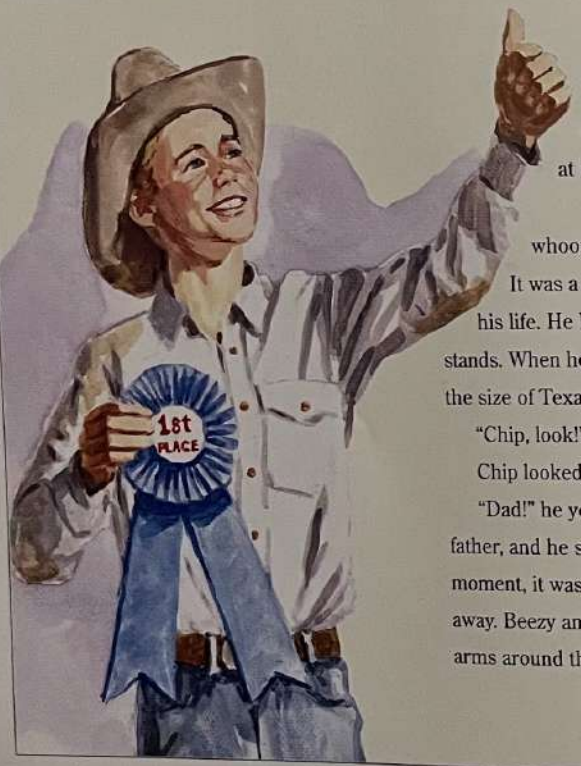
"Mom's still not here," he said. "I'm nervous."

"You can do it," Beezy answered. "I'll be with you all the way."

"Thanks, Beez," Chip said.

He took a deep breath and climbed on Cobalt. The last thing he saw before the bell rang was Beezy's reassuring grin.

Chip took off. He stormed through the course, leaning into the turns, first this way, then that way. He wove in and out of barrels so fast he seemed to be flying. Then he rounded the last turn and blazed across the finish line to take first place.



The crowd roared when Chip received his blue ribbon. Chip smiled at Beezy, flashing him a big thumbs-up.

Suddenly Beezy heard a familiar whooping sound coming from the crowd. It was a man's voice, a voice he had known all his life. He looked around, his eyes searching the stands. When he found what he was looking for, a smile the size of Texas crossed his face.

"Chip, look!" called Beezy.

Chip looked.

"Dad!" he yelled. The two boys rushed to their father, and he swept them up into a big hug. In that moment, it was as if the crowd and the cheering faded away. Beezy and Chip felt nothing but their father's arms around them.

The whole family laughed and cried and talked all at once. Mom and Dad wanted to go right home for a big family dinner.

"We can't leave yet," said Chip. "We have one more thing to see at the fair."

Chip led them across the fairgrounds and into the main exhibition hall. The room was filled with amazing objects of every kind. There were wooden toys, handmade furniture, colorful quilts, and sculptures made of polished stone. In the center of these beautiful objects, displayed on a small table, was Beezy's model of the Big Boy. Behind it sat Theo Ellington.

"Theo," Beezy said. "You entered my model in the competition!"

"No, I didn't," said Theo. "Your brother did."

Beezy looked at Chip. "You did this?" he asked. "Why?"

"Because I know you're a winner," said Chip, "and it's about time you found that out, too."

Beezy couldn't believe it when his name was called.

"And the first place award goes to Beezy Jenkins," said the judge, "for his outstanding model of the Big Boy engine."

Beezy's heart raced as he walked onto the stage and the judge handed him the blue ribbon.

"Congratulations," the judge said. "You're a very talented young man."

Beezy held the blue ribbon up, and all across the exhibition hall, people began to cheer. His mother was crying. His father was clapping so hard his hands were red. Theo was waving his cap in the air. And there, in the front row, cheering louder than anyone else, was his brother Chip.

That night, Chip hung his blue ribbon on the wall over his bed. Beezy hung his ribbon over his bed, too—right next to the picture of the purple rabbit flying a kite.

BEEZY'S BIG BOY

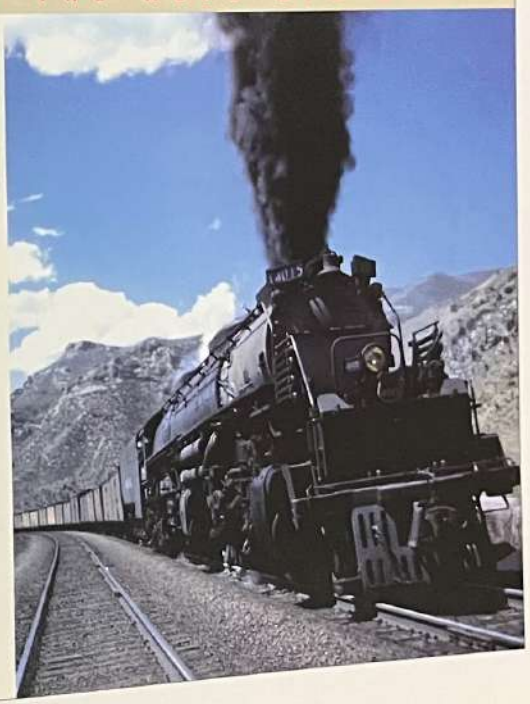
TAKE A LOOK AT THE REAL BIG BOY

They were called 4000s, because each engine carried a number between 4000 and 4024 on the front. But when the huge engines were first being built, a worker wrote "Big Boy" on one with a piece of chalk. Someone took a picture, and the nickname stuck.

The Biggest Ever

The Big Boy was the largest steam locomotive ever built. There were 25 of them, and they ran between 1941 and 1959. The engines were 132 feet long, and some of their wheels were 68 inches high—as tall as a grown man. When a Big Boy was fully loaded with coal and water, the engine and tender together weighed more than a million pounds!

Big Boys were designed to carry heavy loads of freight over the Wahsatch mountains between Wyoming and Utah. During World War II, they were also sometimes used as troop trains, carrying soldiers who were going off to war. The Big Boys often pulled loads of more than 100 freight cars. The train stretched along the tracks as far as the eye could see.



BEEZY'S BIG BOY

In the Train Yard

In the 1940s, many train yards had turntables to help steam engines change direction. Workers would put an engine on the turntable, and the turntable would spin slowly around, so the engine could move off onto different tracks.

Turntables also helped get engines in and out of the roundhouse, where they were cleaned and serviced. The Big Boys were so big that special turntables had to be built just for them, like the one in the above picture.

How the Big Boy Worked

Big Boys were powered by coal. The coal was carried right behind the engine in a car called the tender. (You can see coal being loaded into the Big Boy's tender in the picture on the right.) From there, the coal was gradually moved into a chamber in the engine called the firebox, where it was burned. This heated a big tank of water called the boiler, creating steam. The steam moved the cylinders, which in turn pushed the wheels and moved the train. The Big Boy carried 24,000 gallons of water and 28 tons of coal—twice as much as the train that ran the same route before it. But the Big Boy used twice as much, too. It had to stop along its run to refuel.

The Firebox

The firebox on the Big Boy was huge—as big as a room in your house. In this picture, the engineer and the fireman are in the cab of a Big Boy checking the firebox and the boiler pressure. If the boiler ran dry, the entire engine could blow up!

Union Pacific Museum Collection

Great Railway Adventures (Theme)

Words by Pamela Phillips Oland
Music by Thomas Jones Chase and Steve Rucker
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I can hear the rumble, bold as distant thunder
As a hundred tons o' steel roars down the track
Train comes round the horseshoe turn,
  headlights beam
Then it storms into the station with a rush
  of steam

All aboard as we climb inside
And we know that we're in for an exciting ride

CHORUS
  Like a real live version of a Lionel train
  It's the Great Railway Adventures
  There's not a thing to lose
  And the world to gain
  On the Great Railway Adventures

Streakin' through the darkness, whistlin'
  through the tunnel
As we feel the mighty train wheels grab the rails
Signal switcher on the track changes course
For the locomotive lightnin' that's a megaforce

People wave as we zoom on by
And they stop to hear that powerful whistle cry

All aboard as we climb inside
And we know that we're in for an exciting ride

CHORUS

Repeat CHORUS
On the Great Railway
On the Great Railway Adventures

Mighty Mr. Train

Words and music by Red Grammer
© 2000 Learning Curve International, Inc.

I said, "Where are we going, whoa, mighty Mr. Train?"
He said, "We're bound for St. Louie, on to Memphis,
  then down to New Orleans,
On down to New Orleans."

I said, "How can you pull us, all twenty cars upon the train?"
He said, "There's plenty coal in the coal car,
  just keep feeding the flame,
Keep the fireman feeding the flame."

I said, "Why do you do it, whistlin' through the valleys
  and the plains?"
He said, "See the mighty Mississippi runnin' yonder?
  We're racing to the Pontchartrain,
On down to Lake Pontchartrain."

I said, "When will we get there?" I said, "How will we know?"
He said, "When you see the mossys hanging from the trees
  and the land layin' way down low.
When the land's layin' way down low."

I said, "When this ride is over, what happens then?"
He said, "Before you check into your fancy hotel,
  I'll be riding on the rails again,
I'll be rolling back home again."

I said, "How do they call you? What is your name?"
He said, "You'll know me by my lonesome whistle blowin'
  and the bright red fire of my flame,
The burning red fire of my flame."

She'll Be Coming 'Round the Mountain

Traditional
Lyrics modified by Red Grammer

She'll be coming 'round the mountain
when she comes *(toot, toot)*

She'll be riding on the Big Boy
when she comes *(choo-choo, choo-choo)*

Oh, we'll all go out to meet her
when she comes *("Hi hoho!")*

Oh, the band it will be playing
when she comes *(ra-ta-ta-ta)*

The conductor will be calling
when she comes *("Stand back!")*

Oh, she'll sing a little ditty
when she comes *("La, la-la")*

Oh, we'll have ourselves a hoedown
when she comes *("Yee haw!")*

She'll be coming 'round the mountain
when she comes *(toot, toot)*

The musical score for LeVar Burton's story narration was composed by

Battery-powered engine available in Adventure Pack or sold separately.

Fun and adventure await you in the Great Railway Adventures book series. Beezy Jenkins has always lived in the shadow of his brother Chip. But that's about to change. Come along as Beezy learns that every person has special talents—and discovers he's a winner after all.

LearningCurve™

Lin Oliver is a children's book author and a leading writer and producer of family television and film. Her most recent project is the screen adaptation of the classic *The Trumpet of the Swan*. She is the cofounder and director of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators.

Bill Dodge has illustrated numerous classic and contemporary books for children. He studied at the Academy of Traditional Painting of Harold Ranson Stevenson, a student of Norman Rockwell, and currently teaches at the State University of New York, Farmingdale.

LeVar Burton is an accomplished actor who has appeared in many television shows and movies, including Roots and Star Trek: The Next Generation. He is also the host and co-executive producer of the highly acclaimed PBS children's TV series Reading Rainbow. LeVar won a 2000 Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album for his recording of "The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr."

Great Railway Adventures!

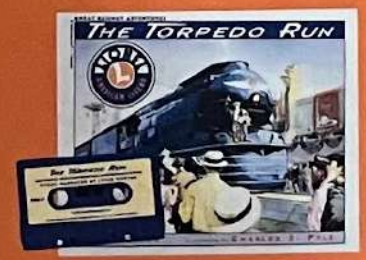
- 32-page fully illustrated storybook
- Audiocassette includes story narration by LeVar Burton, plus exciting railroad sing-along songs performed by award-winning children's entertainer Red Grammer.

The Daylight Limited

The Mighty Mogul

The President Express

Journey of the Jupiter



The Torpedo Run

Beezy's Big Boy

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